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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2663

May 20, 1994

DELINQUENT LOANS -- USDA has new authority to collect large, delinquent loans made by the Farmers Home Administration. Among provisions of the Farmers Home Administration Improvement Act, signed into law by President Clinton, is the ability to use private attorneys in collection and foreclosure actions of farm program loans. Expenses will be paid from the delinquent loans collected. Savings to the Federal government is expected due to the accelerated collection. Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.

EATING THOSE VEGGIES -- Processors expect to contract 1.5 million acres of the five major vegetable crops in the U.S., 12 percent more than last year. All five crops have increased acreage this year. Green peas lead the increase with a gain of 34 percent, due to last year's poor crop and declining inventories. Both sweet corn and tomato acreage are up 9 percent. Snap bean acreage is up 5 percent, and cucumbers up 1 percent. Contact: David Mueller (202) 720-2157.

BROILER EXPORTS -- The United States will remain the world's largest exporter of broiler meat in 1994. Export sales will take a record 10 percent of production this year, totaling an estimated \$1.4 billion. First-quarter exports are estimated at 30 percent above a year earlier, led by increased sales to Russia, the Pacific Rim, Eastern Europe, and Mexico. Exports to Russia jumped from 3.8 million pounds a year ago to 100 million pounds. Russian poultry meat production continues to decline, and inexpensive protein imports are in great demand. Contact: Larry Witucki (202) 219-0766.

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA -- U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy met with his counterparts in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico during a series of meetings conducted in those countries, May 13-19. He discussed agricultural trade and financial matters. Contact: Tom Amontree (202) 720-4623.

PREVENTING FARMLAND CONVERSION -- Action is being taken to assure that Vermont's farm economy will be preserved by allowing the State's farmers to realize the economic value of their land. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy says USDA will guarantee a \$6.6 million dollar loan to help keep farmland in Vermont from being converted to nonfarm purposes. The funds are used by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to purchase development rights. Contact: Joe O'Neill (202) 720-4323.

BUTTER TO UKRAINE -- USDA will donate 800 metric tons of butter for use in the Ukraine. A private U.S. voluntary organization will distribute the butter to aid dietary needs of people in hospitals and mental institutions, old-age homes, schools and orphanages. The \$1.4 million donation will be made under authority granted by the 1949 farm bill to distribute surplus commodities owned by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation to developing countries. Contact: James Keefer (202) 720-5263.

WHEAT -- Winter wheat production is forecast down 6 percent from a year earlier. Area for harvest is expected to decline 4 percent, and yields down one bushels to 39.3 bushels per acre. Spring wheat will decline about 2 percent. Feed and residual use should decline 17 percent. Wheat prices are projected to average \$2.75-\$3.35, unchanged from 1993/94. Contact: Ed Allen (202) 219-0841.

CORN -- The U.S. corn crop is projected at 8.7 billion bushels, up 38 percent from last year's weather affected level. The 78 million acres is about 7 percent higher than a year earlier. Feed and residual use is forecast to increase nearly 8 percent. Farm price range for corn is projected at \$2.10-\$2.50 per bushel, down from \$2.50-\$2.60 this year. Contact: Thomas Tice (202) 219-0840.

SOYBEANS -- Soybean acreage is expected to rise 3 percent and yields to increase 3 bushels per acre to 35 bushels, boosting soybean production 16 percent above 1993/94 levels. Slow growth in foreign demand and expanding foreign oilseed production are expected to result in little increase in U.S. soybean exports. Prices for 48 percent soybean meal at Decatur are expected to decline to \$150-\$180 per ton, down from \$192.50 this year. Contact: Mark Ash (202) 219-0840.

IN SPANISH -- A catalog of consumer publications available in Spanish is now available from the Consumer Information Center. The free 19-page booklet, "Lista de Publicaciones Federales en Espanol para el Consumidor," is a catalog of 200 government publications, all written in Spanish. The publications listed in the catalog are also free. To get a copy send your name and address to the Consumer Information Center, Department 588A, Pueblo, CO 81009. Contact: Michael Clark (202) 501-1794.

Warmer weather is bringing more produce to market, and consumers are seeing more specials on fresh fruits and vegetables. Many fruits, vegetables and grains are among the naturally fiber-bearing foods. Among the benefits of soluble fiber is its apparent usefulness in lowering serum cholesterol in the blood, which in turn lowers the risk of heart disease. The table shows the amount of fiber in various foods.

Fiber's foothold in a healthy diet
The average consumer eats only 12 grams of dietary fiber per day, far less than the 25-35 grams recommended by nutritionists. Fiber-filled foods, rather than fiber supplements, should be the source of dietary fiber. Breads, cereals, fruits and vegetables are good sources of fiber.

| food item & dietary fiber in grams | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| apple—1 small | 3.4 |
| banana—1 medium | 1.8 |
| corn kernels—2/3 cup | 4.2 |
| dry grits—1/2 cup | 11.8 |
| graham crackers—14 | 10.5 |
| kidney beans—1 1/3 cup | 4.8 |
| orange—1 medium | 2.0 |
| parsnip—1 3/4 cup | 5.0 |
| peach—1 medium | 2.3 |
| pear—1 medium | 2.3 |
| peas—1 3/4 cup | 5.0 |
| potato, cooked—3/4 cup | 3.5 |
| rolled oats, dry—1 cup | 9.0 |
| shredded wheat—4 biscuits | 12.2 |
| spinach—4 leaves | 3.6 |
| strawberries—1/2 cup | 2.1 |
| whole wheat bread—1 slice | 2.4 |

Source: Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Texas Agricultural Extension Service
Graphic: Agricultural Communications, The Texas A&M University System

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1928 -- Summer often means outdoor eating, which can sometimes mean food poisoning. Lori Spiczka talks with the director of USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline about preventing foodborne illnesses when preparing a picnic or an outdoor barbecue. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1409 -- New meat handling labels; higher coffee prices on the way?; controlling black spot on roses; grilling for safety; individual mosquito control. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1920 -- 30-day weather forecast; poultry outlook for '94 and beyond; conservation plans on track; summer means hailstorms; selling biotechnology; baiting the boll weevil. (Weekly reel of features.)

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Tuesday, May 31, weekly weather and crops; ag prices; Thursday, June 2, ag income and finance. These are the **USDA reports we know about in advance**. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359
COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545**

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on protecting exterior wood. Pat O'Leary looks at new products from cotton. Brian Norris reports on rural health information.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen on weather and crops. USDA economist James Miller on the dairy outlook.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on safe meat handling food labels (five-part series). Pat O'Leary reports on guayule. NOTE: USDA TV News will transmit an additional 15-minutes on May 26 (4-4:15 p.m. ET) and May 30 (11:15-11:30 a.m.) to include a five-part series on safe meat handling.

On satellite Galaxy 7, transponder 9, channel 9, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 3880 MHz.: Thursdays from 3:45 - 4:00 p.m., ET; Mondays 11:00 - 11:15 a.m., ET.

FOOD SAFETY TAPE -- Severe storms will be striking many sections of the nation this season. In response, USDA TV News has produced an 18:30 tape for broadcasters to use in developing stories addressing viewer concerns about food safety following power failures and natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes and fires. The tape includes soundbites of Susan Conley, director of USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline, and B-roll of food handling tips. For a copy contact Wanda Sullivan (202) 720-5604.

OFFMIKE

RICE AND SOYBEANS...are off to their best start in several years, says **James Guthrie** (KFIN, Jonesboro, AR). Cotton is in and doing well, and prices are already coming down. James says there is real concern among tobacco farmers in his area. They tell him they believe that activists are attempting to put the tobacco farmer out of business. They ask which group of farmers will next feel the focus of activists, those who produce red meat or products containing cholesterol?

WORLD PORK EXPO...will be covered by **Dave Koffee** (WIBC, Indianapolis, IN) when it convenes in town next month. Dave says everything relating to growing and processing pork will be available, from diet to packing to health, also a trade show and equipment exhibits. The expo is open to the public.

LOOKING...is **Max Molleston** (formerly of WKBF/WPXR, Rock Island, IL). Max is keeping up to date on agricultural issues by serving on the agribusiness committee of the chamber of commerce, and writing for the local horticulture society. Call him at (319) 359-1057.

Farm Broadcasters Letter



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Room 528A
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PERFECT SPRING WEATHER...has planting ahead of last year's rate, says **Al Heinz** (KGLO, Mason City, IA). Corn and beans are in and beginning to emerge. Al took part in a half-hour program observing the 40th anniversary of KIMT-TV, Mason City. When the station signed on in 1954, Al served as its first farm broadcaster. Following a brief career in other areas, he also served as the station's last farm broadcaster in 1978 when programming changes were made. Al and other employees recalled the challenges of programming without film or tape.

SPRING HAS BEEN WET...delaying getting into the fields, says **Jeff Nalley** (WOMI/WBKR, Owensboro, KY). Jeff says several tobacco producers in his area report that they have tried growing alternative crops, but have found none that equals the income generated by tobacco. Producers are telling Jeff they want the right to grow tobacco, even if it is entirely exported. Congratulations to Jeff. He is serving on the Kentucky Partnership for Farm Family Health and Safety. Associated with the University of Kentucky, and Western Kentucky University, the project is aimed at how the farm wife can help to protect her family.

VIC POWELL

Office of Communications